

A THEORETICAL INTERLUDE

Stalin. Under its auspices was created the Communist University of the Toilers of the East, the aim of which was to train Communist cadres. Headed in the beginning by Comrade Broido, famous for his rule of terror in Turkestan, the University was not designed to be an intellectual center of objective studies, but to be a propaganda center with the purpose of acquainting students with the principles of Marxism, the tactics of the proletarian revolution, and the customs and languages of oriental peoples. By the summer of 1922 the university had 700 enrolled students belonging to 57 nationalities. The course of study lasted four years and included, aside from theoretical preparation, interim assignments in various parts of the Soviet Republic. The university opened branches in Central Asia, in Irkutsk, and in Baku, the most important being the branch in Tashkent.⁹ The latter played a very important role as a great radiation center of propaganda for Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan, and India. The Soviet Turkestan Coin "mission (*Turkkommissid*) and the Pan-Hindu Revolutionary Committee were located in Tashkent.¹⁰

Apart from the university and its branches, numerous schools of oriental languages were established. They were either autonomous or attached to other institutions of higher learning. In 1922 *Novy Vostok* published an impressive list of these schools, of which the most important were the Institute of Oriental Languages of Moscow, the Oriental Section of the Military College in Moscow, the Center of Practical Studies of the Orient at the Military College of Moscow, the Institute of Classical Orient at the Moscow Museum, the Institute of Living Oriental Languages in Leningrad, and the Institute

of Oriental Languages at Tashkent.¹¹

In addition, the Soviet government also sponsored genuine orientalist studies in order to have at its disposal a number of experts ready to supply it with necessary documentation and facts. Thus the Scientific Association of Orientalists of Russia was founded as a section in the Commissariat for Nationalities. Among the first collaborators in this association were Tardov, an expert on Iran, Raskolnikov and Nikulin for Afghanistan, and Lavrov and Astakhov

¹⁰ Castagn6, *op. cit.*

¹⁰ Barmine, *op. cit.*, pp. 99, 100.

¹¹ Castagn6, *op. cit.*, p. 49.